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Ford Recasts Intelligence Management

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President Ford announced a new chain of command and operational guidelines for the nation's intelligence agencies last night in response to a year of investigations and revelations.

In a televised news conference Mr. Ford declared, "I will not be a party to the dismantling of the CIA and the other intelligence agencies."

At the same time, he maintained that his reorganization by executive orders and guidelines—and new laws that he is asking from Congress—will protect the rights of citizens against abuse by intelligence agents.

Part of Mr. Ford's program is aimed at protecting the government against leaks of official secrets. His proposed legislation will ask Congress to require "every employee" of the executive branch to swear not to divulge classified information improperly. Congress will be asked to make it a crime for a government employee to reveal secrets without authorization.

The tightening of secrecy follows a rash of leaks, including the unauthorized publication of portions of a House committee report on intelligence abuses, which has caused grave concern in the administration.

Mr. Ford's planned program would not affect members of Congress, but he appealed to lawmakers to "clean up their own house." He urged the House to take disciplinary action against those responsible for leaking the House report, calling it "a very serious matter."

A presidential commission headed by Vice President Rockefeller on the Central Intelligence Agency recommended last June that unauthorized disclosure of classified information by CIA employees be made a crime, consistent with "safeguards of the constitutional rights of all affected individuals." Sources quoted commission attorneys as saying such a law might encounter serious constitutional problems.

The House intelligence committee and other critics have called for laws barring covert paramilitary operations abroad and other legislated curbs on secret operations. For the most part Mr. Ford's program relies on executive orders and a presidentially appointed committee to set limits and deal with intelligence agency abuses.

"The final and ultimate responsibility falls on the shoulders of the President," Mr. Ford declared. Asked if this doctrine of presidential responsibility invites abuse, he answered, "It shouldn't happen. I would hope the American people would elect a President who will not abuse that responsibility. I certainly don't intend to."

Full details of the Ford plan are to be disclosed in a message to Congress and White House briefings for reporters scheduled for today. The presidential statement, answers to reporters' questions, and other data available last night showed that the plan contains these elements:

- "Overall policy directions" for foreign intelligence will remain with the National Security Council, the White House agency that handles it now.

- A new Committee on Foreign Intelligence headed by CIA Director George Bush will conduct "management of intelligence." Officials said this interagency panel is to have jurisdiction over the budgets of the Defense Intelligence Agency and the National Security Agency as well as the CIA.

- The Forty Committee which authorizes secret intelligence projects, is to be renamed the Operations Advisory Group, and its membership will be expanded to include the Attorney General and the director of the Office of Management and Budget as "observers."

- A three-member Oversight Board to be headed by former Ambassador Robert D. Murphy will monitor the performance of intelligence agencies, working with the inspectors general of the agencies. The other two members will be former Army Secretary Stephen Ailes and economist Leo Cherne.

- A "comprehensive set of public guidelines" to be written by the White House will serve as "legally binding charters" for intelligence agencies. Certain officials of the agencies will be held legally accountable for any violation of the guidelines, which are to include "specific limitations" on operations that could invade individual rights of Americans.

- "Judicial safeguards" on electronic surveillance and mail openings are to be

sought in legislation. Mr. Ford said the proposed law would require court orders for electronic surveillance in national security cases. Wiretaps have been installed without court orders in such cases in the past.

- Assassination attempts against foreign leaders in peacetime would be prohibited by legislation to be proposed.

- Attorney General Edward H. Levi is drawing up "very strict guidelines" on domestic surveillance activities of the FBI. The FBI's domestic program is to be handled separately from foreign intelligence.

The Ford program is the administration's response to headline revelations of assassination attempts against foreign leaders, illegal bugging, mail opening and break-ins and other spying on Americans.

The President did not deal last night with details of the abuses. "We have learned many lessons from this experience, but we must

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